

# Windsurfing



**Council Approval:** Required  
High Risk  
Tier 2

**Activity Permitted For:** J C S A

**Not Recommended For:** Daisies and Brownies

## About Windsurfing

Windsurfing is an exciting surface water sport that combines the elements of surfing and sailing by using a standing board and sailing rig. It consists of a board usually 8 to 10 feet long, powered by the wind. The rig is connected to the board and consists of a mast, boom, and sail. Learning to windsurf entails learning the concepts of wind and balance. It can be experienced both inland and at the coast, from cruising across flat water in a lake to riding waves at the beach.

To fully enjoy the sport, windsurfers should be comfortable in the water, have the ability to swim, and possess a certain measure of strength, balance, coordination, and attention.

It is best for beginners and intermediate-level windsurfers to learn and practice in standing-level water surrounded by land, such as a lake or salt water bay or alcove. Advanced to expert windsurfers can ride waves in the ocean. Windsurfing instructors usually begin the instructional process on land to guide students through a start-up sequence so girls can orient themselves to the equipment and know what to do when they get in the water.

### Learn More:

- [Windsurfing information Sailing and Classes Index](#)
- [Royal Yachting Association \(RYA\)](#)

## Include Girls with Disabilities

Talk to girls with disabilities and their caregivers. Ask about needs and accommodations with respect to water sports.

If visiting a waterfront such as a lake or beach area, contact the parks office in advance. Also contact the instructor or facility teaching or hosting the windsurfing event. Ask about accommodating people with disabilities and make any possible accommodations to include girls with disabilities.

## Safety Activity Checkpoints

**Check swimming ability.** Participants' swimming abilities should be confirmed and clearly identified (for instance, with colored wristbands to signify beginners, advanced swimmers, and so on) at council-approved sites, or participants can provide proof of swimming-test

certification. In the absence of swimming-test certification, a [swim test](#) should be conducted before or on the day of the activity. Consult with your Girl Scout council for additional guidance.

**All windsurfers must wear a U.S. Coast Guard–approved life jacket.** Type III life jackets are recommended and should fit according to weight and height specifications. Inspect life jackets to ensure that they are in good condition and contain no tears.

**Size up sailboards.** Communicate girls' ages, heights, and weights with windsurfing instructors to ensure the appropriate size equipment is available. Request that sails be the appropriate size (according to weight, height, and ability level) for windsurfers; the larger the sail, the more powerful the sailing capacity. Sailboard decks should be textured (not smooth) to provide traction.

**Select a safe location with a soft, sandy, or muddy bottom.** Choose a location that does not have a sharp-edged or rocky bottom, which can be dangerous and cut feet and limbs. The launching area should be easily accessible and clear of overhead power lines.

**Safeguard valuables.** Don't leave personal belongings and valuables unattended in a public place. If working with a windsurfing school or camp, call to inquire about the organization's storage amenities.

**Prepare for emergencies.** In addition to a lifeguard, at least one adult present should have small craft safety certification or equivalent experience. Ensure the presence of a waterproof first-aid kit and a first-aider with a current certificate in first aid, including adult and child CPR or CPR/AED, and is prepared to handle cases of near-drowning, immersion hypothermia, and sunburn. If any part of the activity is located 30 minutes or more from emergency medical services, ensure the presence of a first-aider with wilderness first aid.

**Stay with the board.** If remaining in the water while taking a break from windsurfing, stay near the board. Lifeguards become concerned if they see a windsurf board "missing" a windsurfer.

**Troubleshoot exhaustion.** In the case of fatigue while in the water (and in light winds), raise the sail down over the back of the board, position leg on top of the sail to prevent it from falling off the board, and paddle (or walk, if water is shallow enough) back to shore. [U.S. Sailing](#) provides instructions.

## Safety Gear

- The facility will provide the windsurfing board, sail, and life jackets.
- Girls bring waterfront/beach essentials, blankets for the sand, towels, and a change of clothes.